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SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
WACHUSETT MOUNTAIN  
STATE RESERVATION COMMISSION.

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JANUARY, 1917.



BOSTON:  
WRIGHT & POTTER PRINTING CO., STATE PRINTERS,  
32 DERNE STREET.  
1917.



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APPROVED BY THE  
SUPERVISOR OF ADMINISTRATION.

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AUG 4 1917

## OFFICERS.

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*Commissioners.*

JOHN T. BURNETT.

THEODORE L. HARLOW.

FRANK C. SMITH, Jr.

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*Superintendent.*

EVERETT W. NEEDHAM,

ADDRESS, PRINCETON, MASS.



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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## REPORT OF THE WACHUSETT MOUNTAIN STATE RESERVATION COMMISSION.

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In one of our previous reports the fact was mentioned of the inaccessibility of the reservation to the general public. A steam railroad runs within 8 miles of the summit on the west side, and an electric railroad within 5 miles on the northeast side. Up to last year there was a side line in operation between the main line and Wachusett Lake, which is 3 miles from the summit. The electric road has always carried on a park and picnic ground at the lake, but in 1906 the city of Fitchburg by an act of the Legislature were given the privilege of including Wachusett Lake in their water supply. Since then the park has been a failure, as the lake was fenced in, and no fishing, boating or bathing allowed. Last summer the company discontinued service on this side line, and in the fall tore up the tracks. Attention is drawn to these facts to show that while the visitors to the reservation are increasing every year, they have to depend now almost entirely on the automobile. It has been brought out in previous reports that the roads approaching the reservation from all directions are the poorest type of country roads, almost impassable seven months in the year, and just passable the other five. For this reason it is obvious that in order to make the reservation more popular, and give the public an opportunity to enjoy its attractions, something must be done to improve the roads approaching it. In 1914 and 1915 bills were sent in to the Legislature asking for a special appropriation to construct a road from Holden to the reservation, completing a State road to Worcester. Both

bills were laid on the table. This year the Worcester Chamber of Commerce will champion the bill, and the Commission will do all in their power to have it receive favorable consideration.

As stated in last year's report, a small start was made in the right direction, and it was continued this year, the Highway Commission appropriating half, the county and town half, and the Wachusett Mountain Commission furnishing the equipment. The work was done with the prison labor used on the reservation, and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles of road have been completed. Following this up another year will bring the road into Princeton, completing about one-third the distance to Holden. A report on the construction and cost of this road work by the Highway Commission engineer, Louis C. T. Loring, will be incorporated in this report.

This makes the fifth year that prisoners have been used as laborers on the reservation, and we still feel that it is the best solution for the handling of the short-sentence prisoner. Most of the men are good workers, and if properly watched and instructed will accomplish a large amount of work. As most of the work this year was 3 miles from the original camp a new location was necessary. This brought the camp within 2 miles of the center of Princeton, but not a complaint has been received in regard to the conduct of the men. The report of the superintendent is appended herewith.

This report cannot be closed without a tribute to the memory of Harold Parker who died on the twenty-ninth day of November, in the year 1916, after serving since its organization in 1899 as chairman of the Commission of the Wachusett Mountain Reservation.

By birth, by education and by association he was a New Englander. He believed in the strength and virtue of its hardy people, whose genuine frankness appealed to his nature more than the softer phrases of a more diplomatic race.

He loved its uneven hills, its rocks and its forests with a love which the landscape garden, with its pergolas and trimmed hedges, could not inspire.

He saw in the Wachusett Reservation a chance, without sacrificing the natural to the artificial, to make a great





HON. HAROLD PARKER.



recreation ground where the weary might find rest, and where the lover of nature might be satisfied.

To this great work he brought the enthusiasm of love, the business training gained by association with progressive men, and the accurately trained mind of a civil engineer.

Never could a more ideal combination be found for such a task.

The man, who in the brief respites from the work of this restless world, turns to nature for his rest, will walk under the trees of this Parker-planned reservation. He will pause upon its hill tops to see the autumn foliage reflected in the waters of its lakes. He will return to his work rested and inspired.

Wachusett Mountain will ever stand as a monument to the memory of Harold Parker.

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN T. BURNETT.  
THEODORE L. HARLOW.  
FRANK C. SMITH, JR.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT.

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*To the Wachusett Mountain State Reservation Commission.*

GENTLEMEN:— At your request I submit the following report covering the year 1916. During the winter a large area of badly infested woodland was thinned out and the brush burned. Enough wood was obtained to supply the Summit House and headquarters. The chestnut blight having taken hold of most of the chestnut growth, I was glad of the opportunity to supply the telephone company with 125 large telephone poles. They were used for a new line running near the mountain, which made a short haul. From a number of the poles a butt log was removed, and these were hauled to the mill and sawed into about 5,000 feet of plank. This was used for repairs to the buildings and pavilions, and some was sold to the town for the construction of a stone crusher hopper. I would advise that the chestnut growth be cut out as quickly as possible, as the blight will ruin it in a few years. Five thousand feet of pine was sawed into boards and used to build a wagon shed and garage.

On the 15th of May the prisoners started work, and we used them until the 12th of December. The roads on the reservation were put in shape for the summer travel, and a large amount of resurfacing done on the mountain road. This road should have an application of oil or tarvia every year, as the increased automobile traffic causes a great amount of waste. It will be necessary to give a longer sweep to one of the sharp turns near the summit on this road, as there were three accidents this year.

From the 1st of June to the 11th of December most of our time was put into the construction of the new road from the reservation to Princeton. I will enclose the report of the Highway Commission engineer, Louis T. C. Loring.

In the fall a gang of prisoners were put to work under the supervision of three government inspectors. A thorough scout was made of most of the mountain for the gypsy moth, and I am sorry to have to report that the entire reservation seems to be infested.

The prisoners were also used to do the planting, haying, mowing brush on the roadsides and general work.

The Summit House has had its most successful year, and I feel sure that, with a good road from Worcester, something will have to be done about enlarging the present house. At your request an article was put in the town warrant asking for an appropriation to extend the electric light system to the reservation, a distance of a mile and one-half. From this extension it would be a mile and one-quarter to the Summit House. One thousand dollars was voted for this extension, but the price of copper wire advanced so rapidly that it was thought advisable to wait until it dropped to somewhere near its normal price. It might be advisable to install a small electric light plant, as there is one on the market at a reasonable price that is giving general satisfaction.

Very truly yours,

EVERETT W. NEEDHAM,

*Superintendent.*

## REPORT OF THE ENGINEER.

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WORCESTER, Dec. 29, 1917.

Mr. J. A. JOHNSTON, *Division Engineer, Springfield, Mass.*

DEAR SIR:— I submit the following report on the construction of the Princeton work:—

This work was done under the supervision of E. W. Needham, superintendent of the Mount Wachusett Reservation. No charge has been made for his services. There were two foremen on the work, one at the crusher and getting out field stone, and the other looked after the grading and placing of the stone. The foremen were paid at the rate of \$2.50 per day, and \$5.00 was paid for the necessary double teams. All the rest of the work was done by prison labor, for which the town paid the county \$1 per day per man.

The length constructed was 5,800 feet, 15 feet wide, area, 9,667 square yards. The approximate cost per square yard of road surface, including shoulders and gutters and drainage, is \$0.67.

The following are the estimated quantities and unit cost:—

Excavation, 1,700 cubic yards, at \$0.31,	. . . . .	\$527 00
Borrow, 650 cubic yards, at \$0.42,	. . . . .	273 00
Stone fill, 3,035 cubic yards, at \$0.86,	. . . . .	2,610 10
Broken stone, 2,900 tons, at \$0.96,	. . . . .	2,784 00
Repairing culverts,	. . . . .	249 99
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Total,	. . . . .	\$6,444 09

There is a balance of \$555.91 from the appropriation for this work available during 1917.

The work has been handled in a very economical manner, and full value has been obtained with the amount expended.

Yours truly,

L. T. C. LORING,  
*Resident Engineer.*



